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PROFESSIONALISM IN THE ARMED FORCES

by

David B. Novy, Lt Col, USAF

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Advisors: Gene Kamena & Dr. Deonna Neal

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Biography

Lieutenant Colonel David B. Novy is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. He entered the Air Force in June 1996 upon graduation from the Armour College of Engineering, Chicago, IL, and earned a Masters Degree in Engineering and Environmental Management from the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. He has served as a design engineer, construction project manager, readiness officer, contract management chief, construction programmer, environmental engineer, budget programmer, executive officer, and squadron commander. His staff experience includes tours at the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Pacific Air Forces, and Headquarters Air Force. He has deployed five times in support of contingency operations in the Middle East including assignments with Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq, Special Operations Command Central/Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command, and most recently as Commander, 451st Expeditionary Support Squadron, Kandahar, Afghanistan. He is a registered Professional Civil Engineer in the State of Alaska.

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Abstract

Professionalism is a term used so frequently and in so many contexts that it is often misapplied. For this reason, this paper reintroduces the concept of military professionalism by drawing upon Samuel Huntington's original description of military professionalism and applying it against a case study of a prominent, and in some interpretations extremely effective, senior military officer: SS Kommandant Rudolph Höss. In this analysis, a scenario develops of a disparity between personal perceptions of "acting professionally" and executing duties associated with the status conferred by membership in the military profession.

The crucial aspect of military professionalism lacking in the Höss model is the social responsibility imposed by, and in the service of, the society the military serves. A potentially problematic scenario develops with the definition of which society is referenced, the values or standards to be upheld, and the motivation of the military professional to meet those standards.

This paper will demonstrate professionalism is more than the execution of violence on behalf of a state, acquiescence to civilian authority, and service in spite of self-interest. Military professionalism requires individual responsibility and accountability for moral agency, dedication to duty, and commitment to the greater good of the society the military serves. For the military professional, the global community of which the nation-state is a participating member informs the society's interests to be served.

Introduction

Rudolph Höss was the Commandant at Auschwitz and he considered himself a military professional.¹ He demonstrated many attributes typically ascribed to professional military conduct: Höss was a "spit-and-polish" career soldier with experience both as an enlisted man on the front lines of World War I and as a commissioned officer in World War II. He executed orders from superiors with bureaucratic efficiency envied by his colleagues, comported himself with stoic detachment from emotion, and dedicated himself to his duty regardless of location, operational demand, or personal compulsion.² He was a recognized expert in his craft, ran a large military-industrial machine recognized by his military and civilian superiors for extreme effectiveness despite significant resource limitations, focused on innovations to safeguard the mental health and psychological well-being of his soldiers, and concluded his military career with an autobiography describing in great detail the pride he felt for his organizational accomplishments.³ The atrocities committed at Auschwitz under his command and at his direction resulted in a conviction for war crimes following WWII and distinction as history's greatest mass murderer. Höss' conviction is not simply a case of "victor's justice" against a vanquished enemy, rather it is a graphic depiction of the distinction between conducting oneself with a supposed professional demeanor, and the actual responsibility of military professionalism. This begs the question, what are the professional obligations of a member of the military profession and what motivations inform the baseline requirements of his or her professional service?

For the purpose of this review, the concept of military professionalism relies foundationally upon Samuel Huntington's definition both of the military profession and the requirements of military professionalism. Huntington described the concept of a profession as "a

special type of vocation [characterized by] expertise, responsibility, and corporateness" and the professional as one "who pursues a 'higher calling' in the service of society."⁴ *The Soldier and the State* defined military professionalism as neither craft nor art, rather the capacity to develop, perfect, and execute the "peculiar skill" of managing violence through the "application of technical knowledge in a human context," on behalf of the state.⁵ Most importantly, Huntington explains the professional is subject to social responsibility imposed by the professional status conferred by the society he secures.⁶

Thesis

In this paper I will analyze the specific failing of Rudolph Höss to meet Huntington's standard of military professionalism vis-à-vis service to society as the defining element of his inadequacy as a military professional. I will 1) argue Höss' distorted view of duty as blind obedience to authority characterized his failure as a military professional, 2) demonstrate the root cause of Höss' failure as an absence of personal accountability with parallels to modern challenges for accountability in large organizations, and 3) consider applications of the lessons exhibited in the Höss scenario for modern military professionals.

Scope of Research

This paper relies foundationally upon Samuel Huntington's classic treatise on the military, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, and the autobiography of Rudolph Höss, *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*, as a case study. Rather than simply accepting the premise Rudolph Höss was an evil person perpetrating war crimes, this paper analyzes his actions through the lens of military professionalism focusing on duty, moral obligation, and service to society.

Texts covering two broad areas of military professionalism are referenced in the analysis of Höss' failures. First, the concepts of military and professional ethics are explored in Anthony Hartle's *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making* considering moral, legal, and psychological dilemmas. Malham Wakin's *War, Morality, and the Military Profession* addresses the civil-military relationship Huntington identified and fundamental moral dilemmas facing military professionals. An article in *Ethical Issues in Professional Life*, "Professional Virtue and Self-regulation," speaks specifically to professional standards and requirements in the broader context of professions writ large. Mark Boven's *The Quest for Responsibility: Accountability and Citizenship in Complex Organizations* offers analyses of the challenge of accountability in large, complex organizations like the military as well as methodologies and case studies in dissent.

The second area of analysis draws on three recent texts to analyze the Höss case study in light of modern military engagements and develop applications of the lessons learned from the Höss case study. Jessica Wolfendale's *Torture and the Military Profession* explores a potential link between military dispositions towards obedience and failures to uphold the laws of armed conflict. Nancy Sherman's *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind* describes the relationship between stoic philosophy and valued aspects of military character. David Brooks' *The Road to Character* studies the link between inner struggle and inner character.

Rudolph Höss

The World War II experience of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Commandant, Rudolph Franz Ferdinand Höss, provides a case study in the atrocities possible in a military environment absent military professionalism. Höss did not begin his military career with significant ambition, rather a sense of wanderlust and adventure as an enlisted man in WW1.⁷ His interwar years included time in a Prussian prison, marriage, and a brief period as a farmer.⁸

It is important to note Höss specifically referred to himself as a member of the 'military profession' when referencing his time as an officer. He was tempted to return to service as a soldier in the interwar period between WWI and WWII to "fulfill and satisfy the inner me."⁹ He returned as a non-commissioned officer and later officer in the Schutzstaffel, or SS, at the specific request of Heinrich Himmler in 1934.¹⁰ In some respects, his tenure as Auschwitz's Camp Commandant exhibited the characteristics of a seemingly model soldier -- loyalty to the chain of command, exacting allegiance to authority, and meticulous execution of orders -- however his failure to exhibit moral courage betrayed his responsibility as member of the military profession.

By his own admission, Höss was the greatest mass murderer of all time. He oversaw the development of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp complex and dozens of sub-camps, developed and refined the process for the murder and disposal of millions of prisoners, and spoke with pride of his academic approach to the implementation of the Nazi's "Final Solution." It begs the question, why would a self-confessed mass murderer assume he was acting as a military professional while perpetrating such a crime?

Theory of the Military as a Profession

Samuel Huntington's, *The Soldier and the State*, written in 1956 serves as the foundational text in this analysis. His theory and analysis of the role of the military, the rise of the vocation to professional status, and the tensions inherent between the demands of military security and the values of the State underpin the origins of the military professional's role in that service.¹¹ His definition includes the three characteristics of a profession -- expertise, responsibility, and corporateness -- and defines the responsibilities associated with the "peculiar skill" associated with the military profession as the "management of violence not the act of violence itself."¹²

Höss' staunchest post-war critics, the victims of his crimes, and the results of his trial, noted his expertise at his assigned tasks and corporateness as a military officer.¹³ His lack of personal responsibility and accountability for his actions as commandant distinguish his failure as a professional and are the crux of this analysis. Höss saw his duty to obey superior's commands as paramount and assumed they relieved him of responsibility for his own actions: "I am constantly faulted because I did not refuse to carry out the extermination order: the horrible murder of women and children...I had to obey, because, after all, wasn't I a soldier? And didn't I choose this course?"¹⁴

To allow Höss the excuse of "just following orders" would eliminate his professional accountability although as a self-professed member of a profession he had an obligation and was accountable to serve the greater needs of society. There is no argument to be made that murdering millions of men, women, and children serves any societal need, so it begs the question, what was the origin of this blind obedience?

Blind obedience was the expected norm at Auschwitz and within the concentration camp system hierarchy. Höss stated, "When [Himmler] gave me the order personally...of course, this order was something extraordinary...I had received an order; I had to carry it out. I could not allow myself to form an opinion as to whether this mass extermination of the Jews was necessary or not."¹⁵ Absent any sense of empathy or respect for the prisoners in Auschwitz, "Höss was a man who needed something to believe in, and more importantly, someone to tell him what to do,"¹⁶ obediently carrying out Himmler's orders. Shortly before his execution following conviction of war crimes, Höss defended himself writing: "Yes, I was hard and strict...But I was never cruel, nor did I let myself get carried away to the point of mistreating prisoners."¹⁷ In this statement the reader notes a blind obedience to orders and refusal to accept personal responsibility for his actions. His brother-in-law, Fritz Hensel, during a visit to Auschwitz, reportedly confronted Höss on the legal and moral aspects of the camp after viewing a truckload of dead bodies. Höss' response indicated a perceptual bias and complete lack of critical thought with his response:

Höss admitted the atrocious nature of the place...'you cannot understand this' he repeated again and again, 'because you come from the outside. Here we look at things differently.'...'[the prisoners] are not like you and me. You saw them for yourself; they are different. They look different. They do not behave like human beings.'¹⁸

Höss' blind obedience characterized his failure as a military professional: he ignored the obligation of professional discernment separating the military professional from a mere military technician. Höss excused himself from personal responsibility because of his blind obedience to authority, effectively negating his claim to professional status.

Personal Accountability in Military Professionalism

Mark Bovens, a professor of Legal Philosophy in the Faculty of Law at the University of Utrecht and a policy advisor to the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands addresses the challenges of accountability in his book *The Quest for Responsibility: Accountability and Citizenship in Complex Organizations*. The complexity of military organizations is directly analogous to the corporations Boven's cites specifically because of the similarity between the "authoritarian and hierarchical frameworks" in the private sector in which "most people lose much of their sensitivity for the moral values that help prevent injury to others."¹⁹

Bovens attributes the challenge of accountability in large organizations as the 'problem of too many hands': multiple functionaries, bureaucratic structure, and unclear lines of authority.²⁰

In search of individual accountability, Bovens classifies ten excuses offered in defense of "responsibility-as-accountability" by complicit employees:

1) small cog in a big machine, 2) others did much more than I, 3) if I had not done it, others would, 4) even without my contribution it would have happened, 5) without my contribution, it would have been even worse, 6) I had nothing to do with it, 7) I wash my hands of the whole business, 8) I knew nothing of it, 9) I only followed orders, 10) I had no choice.²¹

Notable throughout Boven's work is a prosecution of failed "private morality" where culpable individuals, lacking moral courage, defer to social coercion or assumed organizational anonymity to avoid responsibility. Bovens offers analyses of both passive and active responsibility, an extensive review of whistleblowing provisions and limits of legal protections²², and the value of fostering loyalty²³ and responsibility²⁴ in an organization as means of developing corporate accountability.

In an attempted defense of his actions, Höss exhausted Bovens' list of excuses: the small cog in the big machine, expectations someone else would have stepped in if Höss had not

accepted the assignment, claiming no responsibility for prisoner mistreatment, and simultaneously claiming without his efforts it would have been worse.²⁵ Höss' admission in his post-conviction declaration, "A great deal happened...presumably in my name, on my direction, on my orders, about which I neither knew, nor would have tolerated, nor approved of"²⁶ is directly contradicted by Fritz Hensel's account arguing morality in the camp,²⁷ as well as Höss' own detailed descriptions of his personal reactions observing mothers and children being gassed, his self-described expertise on the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," and his demonstrated concern for his soldiers who carried out his orders in the camp.²⁸

Professionalism, Civil-Military Relations, and Extreme Nationalism

In Höss' time, the rise of nationalism drew a clear distinction between the German people and other races. Nationalism is defined as the "propensity of individuals to identify their personal interest with that of a group...to identify that interest on the basis of a 'culture' that the group shares, and a purported history that the group purportedly shares; and to believe that this group must have a state structure of its own in order to thrive" generally tied to perceived political, social, and economic changes.²⁹ Civil-Military relations in Höss' Germany were defined by that extreme nationalism and clouded the social responsibility obligated by Höss' membership in the military profession. At the core of Huntington's text lies the inherent tension between the values of the society to which the military is subordinate and the functional imperatives of the security the military is charged with providing.³⁰ Within that military-political environment of early 20th century Germany, rising nationalism colored every facet of military and political life. For the requirement of balancing society's needs and military necessity, however, Höss was inadequate. Primo Levi, a Jewish chemist and writer who survived eleven months as a prisoner in Auschwitz noted, "Höss may have been one of the worst criminals of all

time, but his makeup was not dissimilar from that of any citizen of any country. His guilt...lay entirely in the fact he was unable to resist the pressure exerted on him by a violent environment..."³¹ An analysis presented during the Nuremberg trials concluded Höss' role in the Holocaust categorically failed in balancing legitimate societal values and military necessity, attributing that deviation in part to his identification with the ideological morality of the Nazi SS:

"He had abandoned traditional morality for ideological morality. Political murder for the protection of the Fatherland was a virtue to Höss...there is a limit to the number of people you can kill out of hatred or lust for slaughter, but there is no limit to the number you can kill in the cool, systematic manner of the military 'categorical imperative'." ³²

The ideological morality of the Nazis pre-dated Hitler's rise to power and is traceable to extreme nationalist tendencies in the early 1900s. German public education stressed a version of nationalism with regime loyalty as a primary driver for educational material prior to World War I.³³ Höss clearly exhibited his nationalist indoctrination when he exclaimed, "Since the Fuhrer himself had ordered 'The Final Solution of the Jewish Question,' there was no second guessing for an old National Socialist, much less an SS officer. 'Fuhrer, you order. We obey,' was not just a phrase or a slogan."³⁴

This failed "private morality" as a result of extreme nationalism is a steady theme in intensified interstate conflict.³⁵ Because failed "private morality" is a consistent topic in this discussion of accountability, hierarchical organizations, and nationalism, an analysis of moral obligations of military professionals is in order.

Moral Obligations of the Military Professional

Early in Höss' autobiography, it becomes clear his focus is on satisfying his military masters and delivering on the Nazi's Final Solution. Absent from his narrative is a consideration of moral legitimacy. In this respect, the duty Höss identified with, and the Nazi hierarchy to

which he pledged himself, eliminated moral agency by his declaration: "There is only one thing that is valid: Orders!"³⁶

Malham M. Wakin's *War, Morality, and the Military Profession* provides a collection of articles studying both the profession of arms as well as morality in conflicts. At the time of printing, Wakin was the head of the Department of Philosophy and Fine Arts at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Although the text is almost 40 years old, the themes are consistent with modern military conflicts. Wakin offers four themes in his selected readings: the human values necessary for the "proper pursuit of the military function," the consequences of military incompetence and immorality, tensions and disparity between military and societal values, and the role of "traditional professional values" in the military profession.³⁷ Of particular relevance to the topic of military professionalism is Sarkesian and Gannon's article, "Professionalism: Problems and Challenges" dealing with the separation of the military from the society and inherent tensions between the conservative military mindset and traditionally liberal society it serves.

Sarkesian and Gannon call for a "commitment to the idea that the military professional is part of the American political system and civilian value structure [and] must understand the political 'rules of the game'...prevailing in the broader political system."³⁸ Citing a 1970 study on military professionalism at the Army War College, the authors question the professional validity of "individual-institutional relations" vis-à-vis professional ethics and dissent.³⁹ Referencing a shared obligation to foster "healthy skepticism, reasonable inquiry, and legitimate dissent" to foster "innovation, imagination, self-examination" in the furtherance of military professionalism within the ranks, the authors point towards the professional obligations extending beyond abject subordination and blind obedience.⁴⁰ They develop an argument

placing "institutional requirements and professional demands regardless of individual preferences and attitudes"⁴¹ versus "individual conscience and 'individuality'" as a fundamental test of the profession.⁴² Ultimately, the authors criticize the military preference for unconditional loyalty and obedience as counterproductive to integrity, institutional goals, and legitimacy of the profession.⁴³ Although their point of reference was the war in Vietnam, the criticism (and impact) of unconditional loyalty across conflicts is a consistent theme with the Höss case study.

Höss' defense of his actions rested primarily on his obedience to orders. Two additional articles in Wakin's book expand on the themes of professional vulnerabilities and offer insight into grounds for dissent rather than abject conformity: Telford Taylor, an attorney best known for his role as a prosecutor at Nuremberg, wrote "Superior Orders and Reprisals," and R.M. Hare, a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Oxford, contributed "Can I be Blamed for Obeying Orders?" Taylor's article distinguishes between the obligations of moral responsibility and a theoretical defense of 'following orders.' From the perspective of military professionalism, Taylor's explanation of obligation by subordinates to follow lawful orders leads to his admonition "the indulgence shown to the soldier on the theory that his first duty is to give unquestioning obedience, the greater the responsibility of the officer to see to it that obedience entails no criminal consequences."⁴⁴ Hare offers a philosophical evaluation of subordinate responsibilities, specifically evaluating the contributions of Hume and Kant in moral discernment. In evaluating moral responsibility, Hare defers to Kant's argument that individuals must "make our own moral judgments, and cannot get them made for us, without any decision on our part..."⁴⁵ Hare concludes with the following moral warning:

We must never lose sight of the distinction between what we are told to do and what we ought to do. There is a point beyond which we cannot get rid of our own moral responsibilities by laying them on the shoulders of a superior, whether he be

general, priest or politician, human or divine. Anyone who thinks otherwise has not understood what a moral decision is.⁴⁶

Taken in their collective perspective, the essays in Wakin's text offer an approach to civil-military relations supportive of modern concepts of separation of military and political authority. Wakin's authors offer an approach to operating within the inherent tensions between a traditionally conservative military and progressively more liberal society while Huntington unrealistically called for "a shift in basic American values from liberalism to conservatism" to permit "American military leaders to combine the political power which society thrusts upon them with the military professionalism without which society cannot endure."⁴⁷

Application of the Höss Case Study for Modern Military Professionals

Turning to moral obligations of military professionals in the post-9/11 world, Colonel Anthony E. Hartle, chair of the English Department at West Point, begins his book, *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*, with the following characterization: "The environment in which members of the military must operate poses a severe threat to consistent moral behavior...men and women in uniform in the twenty-first century face a confusing variety of inconsistencies in national policy, government practice, and social behavior."⁴⁸ Hartle asserts members of the military profession ascribe to a professional code governing its members that "is not a formally codified set of rules," rather it is the "product of tradition and experience" resulting from three influences: "the functional requirements of military service, the international laws of war, and the core values of American society."⁴⁹ The author describes the American professional military ethic as a networked array of moral obligations and professional commitment to four interrelated identities: servant to the nation as sworn to in the oath of office,⁵⁰ member of a profession with specific professional responsibilities,⁵¹ warrior,⁵² and leader of character subject to the "traditional idealist code" of duty-honor-country.⁵³ At the root of the potential conflict between

American values and the responsibilities of the military professional, Hartle explains the military professional must choose between the rights of a particular individual or his commitment to serve society's interests.⁵⁴ The resolution of such a conflict must be based on a prioritization among values such as "American commitment to freedom and respect for individual persons...and our right to defend ourselves and enhance our own security."⁵⁵ Ultimately, Hartle concludes with seven boundary conditions for the professional military ethic in justifying military decisions he terms the Duty Principle:

1) Accept service to country as the primary duty and defense of the Constitution of the United States as a calling; 2) [Professionals] conduct themselves at all times as persons of honor whose integrity, loyalty, and courage are exemplary; 3) Develop and maintain the highest possible level of professional knowledge and skill; 4) Take full responsibility for their actions and orders; 5) Promote and safeguard, within the context of mission accomplishment, the welfare of subordinates; 6) Conform strictly to the principle that subordinates the military to civilian authority; 7) Adhere to the laws of war and the regulations of service [components] in performing professional functions.⁵⁶

In this respect, Jessica Wolfendale's *Torture and the Military Profession*, published in 2007, supports Hartle and builds on Huntington's definition of the military profession advocating an expansion beyond the officer class members of the profession to include all ranks.⁵⁷ She reasserts the status both of the military as a legitimate profession citing the specific human needs served, the monopoly on the service provided, the autonomy afforded to the military, and proficiency required for continued service and advancement.⁵⁸ Wolfendale expands the discussion of professionalism specifically along the lines of moral agency and the obligations of adherence to the ideals of the profession. Her analysis of the role of the military as an agent of the State develops the concept of tension between civil authority and military professionalism, specifically along the lines of obedience. Wolfendale offers an in-depth analysis of the apparent disparity between military professionalism and the moral integrity and judgment associated with

professional status.⁵⁹ She concludes military professionalism demands more than blind obedience to authority, necessitating training in reflective moral agency, and challenging "assumptions about the relationship between unreflective obedience and effective military functioning."⁶⁰

Physical courage is a general assumption of military service and Höss clearly demonstrated it in his service during World War I⁶¹ and as a prison inmate in Poland in the early interwar period.⁶² Beyond physical courage, however, Wolfendale and Hartle articulate that professionalism surpasses blind obedience and demands moral agency and moral courage.⁶³ Throughout his memoirs, Höss reinforces the assertion he was a man of absolute ideologies viewing the world and relationships as concrete and objective. Although Höss repeatedly states his compassion for prisoners in his memoirs and asserts an identification with their plight based on his own experiences, he admits failing to address any concerns with his superiors, apparently driven to behave as his did out of fear of being considered weak;⁶⁴ "I did not have the courage to [address compassion for prisoners]. I did not want to reveal myself because I didn't want to admit my sensitivity."⁶⁵

Clearly, through his inability to show empathy or accept responsibility, Höss demonstrated flawed personal character. What can be done to develop character within modern military professionals?

Character as the Bridge between Responsibility and Professionalism

What motivates a professional towards personal and collective accountability? Two authors offer insights into character, accountability, and character development. Nancy Sherman's *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy Behind the Military Mind* offers insight into personal motivation, conduct, standards, and self-perception through the lens of Stoic philosophy

as a means of developing the character requisite in military professionals. Sherman was the inaugural holder of the Distinguished Chair in Ethics at the United States Naval Academy. She notes the gap between military and civil societies is psychological more than physical.⁶⁶ Quoting Epictetus, she notes the Stoic's assertion "In our power are moral character and all its functions" citing the discipline, control, and perfectionism in an effort to limit vulnerability, endure hardship, and "survive the most devastating psychological deprivations."⁶⁷ The maintenance of high moral character and professional standards in the military profession speaks to the stoic value not in external goods such as material possessions or wealth, but on internal investments such as virtue shared with others (i.e., core values).⁶⁸

Because Stoic virtue is not an innate quality, but rather developed in an individual, the author uses a case study on the abuses at Abu Ghraib prison to highlight the virtues of Stoic character. She references two points on moral psychology applicable to military professionalism: a concept attributed to Hierocles making mutual respect between two parties concrete through empathy, and Seneca's warning against anger and abusive rage producing havoc in the lives of both violators and the violated.⁶⁹ Sherman develops this point comparing the inadequacy of teaching the Geneva Conventions as a means of preventing detainee abuse, advocating instead for cultivating habits of demonstrating respect for the dignity of all persons since by nature "we are selective in our respect...[it is] neither automatic nor ubiquitous."⁷⁰ Sherman concludes, "if we are to fight wars with some sense of honor, courage, and commitment, then we must be committed to being morally scrupulous, from commander in chief down to foot soldiers."⁷¹

David Brooks is a Yale University professor and *New York Times* columnist whose book *The Road to Character* provides a different perspective on character and character development.

Brooks offers nine biographical case studies in human frailty, failure, achievement, and conquest of self, highlighting his premise that character is a product of experience and personal response to a societal "moral ecology."⁷² The sketches include two notable military figures, Dwight Eisenhower, who Brooks points out organized his life around considered self-restraint rather than impulsive self-expression, and George Marshall, whose commitment to humility and moral depth led to a career trajectory that influenced regional and international security for generations. Atypical of traditional leadership biopics, these studies identify the lifelong development of character, citing professional shortfalls, setbacks, and personal reincarnations. Brooks distinguishes between 'resume virtues' (achievements) and 'eulogy virtues' (character) citing Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's reference in *Lonely Man of Faith*⁷³ of two opposing sides of human nature he dubbed Adam I and Adam II.⁷⁴ Brooks' biographic sketches track the Adam I ambitions of individuals to "build, create, produce, and discover things...to have high status and win victories" and the growth of Adam II virtue to "embody certain moral qualities...to have a serene inner character, a quiet but solid sense of right and wrong--not only to do good, but to be good."⁷⁵ The result of Brooks' analysis is his Humility Code, characterized by a desire to "restore balance, to rediscover Adam II" along 15 axes of character development.⁷⁶

In these two texts, Sherman and Brooks offer convergent perspectives pointing towards individual accountability as the definitive characteristic in their ideal person of character. Rather assume character is a teachable trait, all three authors point to the cultivation of character individually and organizationally. The cultivation of character theory advocated in Sherman's analysis of Stoic philosophy is supported by the case studies in Brooks' biographic sketches. Brooks' analyses exemplify influential military and civilian personalities grown from and

through hardship, religious awakening or reawakening, or decades of unexceptional performance to achieve 'good.'

Analysis

"Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work becomes patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority."

Stanley Milgram⁷⁷

In light of the reviewed texts, it is necessary to reconsider Huntington's 1957 definition of military professionalism. Rather than a wholesale revision, an expansion and clarification of Huntington are in order.

Re-Defining Responsibility for Professionalism's Obligations

Huntington's foundational text specified only regular officers as military professionals. In the current era, Huntington's narrow categorization limiting the professional ranks may imply expectations of military professionalism do not extend beyond that category. However, operational realities and public perception dictate otherwise. Further expanding the umbrella of professional responsibility is supported by Wolfendale's assessment "because of the nature of military special permissions, military personnel of *all* ranks should be bound by professional ideals and professional moral constraints."⁷⁸

The degree to which public perception fails to delineate between the 'professional class' of military officers and the U.S. military writ large focuses the dilemma: Is it possible to hold all service members to the professional ideals and moral constraints of Huntington's professional class without granting professional license to every member? Focusing on the military as an institution already imposes that obligation on all members by association if not by formal license.⁷⁹ Because the authority of the military derives from the public it serves, this is not

inconsequential. Considering Bovens' analysis of corporate accountability, by membership in the military the "organization is itself addressed on account of its conduct...what remains is the control question."⁸⁰

Regardless of rank within the military then, as a member of the service, organizational conduct reflects on all members and professional obligations should, therefore, be imposed on all members. According to Bovens, the control of the organization is a separate question entirely, for which Huntington provides a response: "The direction, operations, and control of a human organization whose primary function is the application of violence is the peculiar skill of the officer."⁸¹

Explaining Professionalism

If the expectation of professionalism translates to all members of the armed services, what is the specific professional standard to which members are held? Professionalism is more than acting out the profession of arms by committing violence on behalf of the state. Huntington's discussion on the evolution of professional armies demonstrates mercenaries are capable of that simplified task.⁸² Huntington highlighted the semantic difference between "professional in the sense of one who works for monetary gain and...the one who pursues a 'higher calling' in the service of society."⁸³ The higher calling in the *military* service of society includes the "...basic themes of military professionalism...integrity, obedience, loyalty, commitment, trust, honor, and service."⁸⁴ Each theme relies upon loyalty to a professional ethic, necessary competence in the art of war, unconditional commitment to duty "for the full distance," and military honor.⁸⁵ Ultimately, military professionalism is embodied as "higher loyalty" to the country and Constitution⁸⁶ that U.S. military members are sworn to defend. While

physical courage is understood as *de rigueur* for military combat, moral courage is the *sine qua non* of military professionalism and the service of the larger society.⁸⁷

Does Professional Obligation Change Over Time?

Is a 70-year-old case study and 60-year-old definition still valid? Starting with Huntington's definition, "so long as there is no basic alteration in the inherent nature of the military function, there will be no change in the content of the professional ethic. Simple changes in military technique such as developments in weapons technology...do not alter the character of the military ethic any more than the discovery of penicillin altered medical ethics."⁸⁸

The evolution in a parent society's values, however, does require reconsideration and expansion of Huntington's model. Huntington specifically rejected the notion of liberal societal values as commensurate with a strong military defense. According to Huntington, liberal society is at odds with military values because it "emphasizes the reason and moral dignity of the individual and opposes political, economic, and social restraints upon individual liberty" and cites disparities between values of natural relations among man (conflict vs. peace), successful endeavors (subordination and specialization vs. individual energies), and social behavior (obedience vs. self-expression).⁸⁹ But 70 years later, Hartle cites our concept of individualism remains in the "canon of American values [with] the idea that each person is self-determining."⁹⁰ Huntington favored Edmund Burke's perspective on conservatism specifically eschewing liberalism's "patterning of military institutions upon nonmilitary ideas"⁹¹ and decrying liberal reliance on "institutional devices such as international law, international courts, and international organization."⁹² To Huntington, liberalism was "a threat both to peace and to constitutional government."⁹³ By contrast, the post-World War II era has been dominated by varying degrees

of liberal internationalism (including international law, international courts, and international organization) in U.S. strategy and domestic politics generally followed suit.⁹⁴

The dominant feature of liberal internationalism in American global engagement points to another factor bearing consideration: what society influences the military professional? The contrast between Huntington's assertions of conservative social-political structure and the current liberal reality is stark. Hartle addressed expanding the values informing professional moral obligation in his 'good combatant' definition. The 'good combatant' meets three criteria: functionality of purpose, adherence to the societal values the military serves, and compliance with the moral and legal principles of international law that binds societies.⁹⁵ Because of this evolution in the political environment, we must expand Huntington's definition of professionalism to acknowledge the international values and norms as additional constraints of "social responsibility."⁹⁶

Huntington's conservatism points dangerously towards a potentially extreme conclusion: support for either illiberal democracy (popularly elected, but lacking transparency or checks and balance) or extreme nationalism (of the type described in the Höss case study where military goals and national values dangerously converge) as an ideal environment for the military professional to assume political power. Huntington idealized a pattern of civil-military relations with "pro-military ideology, high military political power, and high military professionalism" because it would offer relative parity in levels of power in the civil-military balance, but offers a caveat: maintenance of the equilibrium is "difficult at best." Hartle cautions on that equilibrium saying "to the extent democracy is considered a morally superior system providing the justification for radical nationalism and interventionist policies...it could present a potential conflict with the laws of war"⁹⁷ and international norms. That conflict with the definition of

professionalism described in this paper is evident and the Höss case study places this assertion into sharp focus.

Pitfalls for Professionalism

Military obedience presents one of the greatest potential pitfalls for military professionalism and is closely linked with failure of character, moral agency, and professional accountability. The potential pitfalls presented here are not all-inclusive but indicative of the biggest issues identified by the authors reviewed in this study. In broadest terms, these pitfalls represent basic themes of professionalism such as obedience, loyalty, and commitment, taken to disastrous extremes.

Wakin identified obedience as a military virtue, but several authors reviewed in this paper offer expanded perspectives limiting the extent of obedience in the realm of military professionalism. Huntington developed the concept of civilian control in significant detail, clearly delineating "war is the instrument of politics, that the military are the servants of the statesman, and that civilian control is essential to military professionalism."⁹⁸ However, he did not condone blind obedience, nor misplaced loyalty. Wolfendale, echoing Huntington's caution against soldiers surrendering their right to ultimate moral judgments to the civilian hierarchy,⁹⁹ cited crimes of obedience attributable to inadequate moral agency and/or systemic inadequacies in military training.¹⁰⁰

With respect to misplaced loyalty, General Douglas MacArthur's criticism of German generals at Nuremberg foresaw the potential pitfall when he denounced the "new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept that the members of our armed forces owe primary allegiance and loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the executive branch of government rather than to the country and its Constitution which they are sworn to defend."¹⁰¹

According to MacArthur, in a statement specifically referencing German defendants at Nuremberg, the effect of misplaced loyalty manifests itself in many ways, but as a failure of professionalism, perhaps the greatest is the lack of necessary dissent: "There are...occasions when the refusal of a military man to comply is not insubordinate, but is his positive duty."¹⁰² Wolfendale,¹⁰³ Bovens,¹⁰⁴ and Dixon¹⁰⁵ offer considerable analysis and reflection on the importance of dissent as a model of personal accountability within the military profession.

Finally, the role of character development as the bridge between responsibility and military professionalism offers a potential backstop against failures of professionalism. Character represents the difference between a professional façade and legitimate professional accountability. Sherman's analysis of the Stoics combined with Brooks' expansion of the Adam I and Adam II analogy of character development offers insights into the dangers of placing personal ambition and self-advancement ahead of professional obligations. Huntington declared the military ethic is fundamentally anti-individualistic¹⁰⁶ and contrary to the pursuit of personal goals. Sherman's Stoic criticism of "false investments"¹⁰⁷ such as accumulation of property, wealth, fame, honors, etc., align with that view. Neither seems to disagree with Brooks' assertion the Adam I pursuits of high status and victories are diametrically opposed to the character building qualities in Adam II. The Adam II virtue to "not only do good, but be good"¹⁰⁸ offers the strongest case for personal development in pursuit of professional responsibility. The Adam II focus on the "sacrifice of self in the service of others"¹⁰⁹ develops Sherman's Stoic virtues of moral character,¹¹⁰ mutual respect,¹¹¹ and moral obligations towards dignity of humanity.¹¹²

Conclusion

Höss assumed blind obedience and zealous nationalism were paramount for military professionalism; clearly his abject subservience to immoral orders was the antithesis of the

principle. Huntington's definition described military professionalism as the capacity of service to develop, perfect, and execute the "peculiar skill" of managing violence on behalf of the state, inclusive of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness, and subject to social responsibility to the society the military serves.¹¹³ In modern society, facing modern military commitments, military professionalism is the responsibility of all members of the profession of arms and is a personal as well as collective endeavor. The concepts of extreme nationalism, Burkean conservatism, or isolationism, are at odds with these principles. Military professionalism is then more than the execution of violence on behalf of a state demanding acquiescence to civilian authority and service in spite of self-interest -- it requires individual responsibility and accountability for moral agency, dedication to duty, and commitment to the greater good of the society the military defends and the global community of which the parent society is a participating member.

Notes

- ¹ Rudolph Höss and Steven Paskuly. *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1996. p. 8
- ² *ibid.*, p. 8
- ³ *ibid.*, p. 6-9
- ⁴ Samuel P. Huntington. *The Soldier and the State.: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957. p. 8
- ⁵ *ibid.*, p. 13
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p. 13-16.
- ⁷ Höss and Paskuly., p. 54-59
- ⁸ *ibid.*, p. 81
- ⁹ *ibid.*, p. 81
- ¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 81
- ¹¹ Huntington., p. 456
- ¹² *ibid.*, p. 13
- ¹³ Höss and Paskuly, p. 4-9, 20
- ¹⁴ Rudolph Höss and Steven Paskuly. *Death Dealer: The Memoirs of the SS Kommandant at Auschwitz*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1996. p. 84 and 171
- ¹⁵ Höss and Paskuly, p. 153
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 198
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 184-6
- ¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 198
- ¹⁹ Bovens, p. 126-7
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 4
- ²¹ *ibid.*, p. 113-124
- ²² *ibid.*, p. 190-214
- ²³ *ibid.*, p. 224-227
- ²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 215
- ²⁵ Höss and Paskuly., p. 155-64
- ²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 184
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 198
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 162-3
- ²⁹ Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power." *International Security*, Vol. 18, No 2 (Fall 1993), p. 81
- ³⁰ Huntington, p. 456-468
- ³¹ *ibid.*, p. 4
- ³² *ibid.*, p. 201
- ³³ Bary R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power." *International Security*, Vol 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993), p 117.
- ³⁴ Höss and Paskuly., p. 153
- ³⁵ Posen, p. 81
- ³⁶ Höss and Paskuly., p. 101
- ³⁷ Malham M. Wakin. *War, Morality, and the Military Profession*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979. p. ix

- ³⁸ *ibid.*, p.129-130
- ³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 131-2
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 134
- ⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 136
- ⁴² *ibid.*, p. 137
- ⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 136-7
- ⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 438
- ⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 445
- ⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 450
- ⁴⁷ Huntington, p. 464
- ⁴⁸ Anthony E. Hartle. *Moral Issues in Military Decision Making*. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2004. p. 1
- ⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 9
- ⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 44
- ⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 45
- ⁵² *ibid.*, p. 67
- ⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 56
- ⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 146
- ⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 146-7
- ⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 170-171
- ⁵⁷ Jessica Wolfendale. *Torture and the Military Profession*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. p. 49
- ⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 48-54
- ⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 96
- ⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 189
- ⁶¹ Höss and Paskuly., p. 54-59
- ⁶² *ibid.*, p. 64-76
- ⁶³ Wolfendale, p. 189
- ⁶⁴ Höss and Paskuly., p. 202
- ⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 95
- ⁶⁶ Nancy Sherman, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. P. 20
- ⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 26-7
- ⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 67
- ⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 176
- ⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p 176-7
- ⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 178
- ⁷² David Brooks, *The Road to Character*. New York: Random House, 2015. p. 261
- ⁷³ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Lonely Man of Faith*. Koren Publishers, 2011.
- ⁷⁴ Brooks, p. xi
- ⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. xii
- ⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 261-267 Out of deference to the author, I have not paraphrased the 15 points of his humility code here. Brooks states on page 261, "I thought it might be useful to draw them together and recapitulate them here in one list, even if presenting them in numbered list form does tend to simplify them and make them seem cruder than they are." The value in Brooks' *The*

Road to Character is following him along the journey on that road, not condensing the trip into an even more paraphrased list.

- ⁷⁷ Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. New York, 1974
- ⁷⁸ Wolfendale, p. 49; emphasis included in original text.
- ⁷⁹ Moskos, et al., p. 20
- ⁸⁰ Bovens, p. 57
- ⁸¹ Huntington, p. 11
- ⁸² *ibid*, p. 20
- ⁸³ *ibid*, p. 8
- ⁸⁴ Wakin, p. 135
- ⁸⁵ Bradford & Brown and Janowitz in Wakin, p. 134-5
- ⁸⁶ Huntington, p. 353
- ⁸⁷ Wakin, p. 175
- ⁸⁸ Huntington, p. 62
- ⁸⁹ *ibid*, p. 90
- ⁹⁰ Hartle, p. 144
- ⁹¹ Huntington, p. 93
- ⁹² *ibid*, p. 90-91
- ⁹³ *ibid*, p. 91
- ⁹⁴ Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton U Press, 2006. p. 114-171
- ⁹⁵ Hartle, p. 32-5
- ⁹⁶ Huntington, p. 14
- ⁹⁷ Hartle, p. 145
- ⁹⁸ Huntington, p. 79
- ⁹⁹ *ibid*, p. 78
- ¹⁰⁰ Wolfendale, p. 98-160
- ¹⁰¹ Huntington, p. 353
- ¹⁰² Quoted in Huntington, p. 354
- ¹⁰³ Wolfendale, p. 77-97
- ¹⁰⁴ Bovens, p. 148-230
- ¹⁰⁵ Dixon, p. 157-162
- ¹⁰⁶ Huntington, p. 64
- ¹⁰⁷ Sherman, p. 67
- ¹⁰⁸ Brooks, p. xii
- ¹⁰⁹ *ibid*, p. xii
- ¹¹⁰ Sherman, p. 27
- ¹¹¹ *ibid*, p. 45
- ¹¹² *ibid*, p. 177
- ¹¹³ Huntington., p. 13